

# Sanitary Secrets

100 pad ads in 100 years

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#### **Acknowledgments**

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L'amour? I also wish to thank my
family for their loving support and
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#### Designer, author & curator

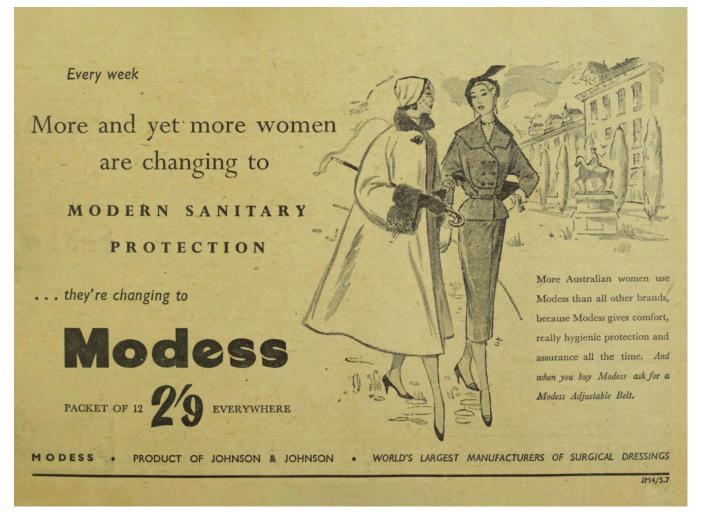
Dr Jane Connory has curated the 'Sanitary Secrets' exhibition as part of her research exploring the visibility and diversity of women in design. She is a lecturer at Swinburne University's School of Design and has held positions as the National Head of Research and Insight at the Design Institute of Australian, the Vice President of Creative Women's Circle and Coordinator of the Emerging Scholars Workshop at the Design and Culture, Francis and Taylor journal.

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1. Below: 1954, *The Australian* Woman's Mirror, Vol. 30 No. 38, pp.23, *The Bulletin Newspaper*, Sydney.



#### Introduction

Say the word 'period' in public and you will get a mixed response. Some people will real in shock, some will pretend nothing was said and still some will enthusiastically engage in the topic. However, many will turn away in shame and turn red with embarrassment.

A period is a natural and healthy occurrence for a body that is ready to reproduce children. It is nothing to be ashamed of. Yet where do these negative behaviours stem from? Print advertising, especially in women's magazines, has a bad reputation for promoting this response of shame and embarrassment.

The 'Sanitary Secrets' exhibition is a curated collection of 100 'pad ads' (or period product advertisements) that have been printed in Australian women's magazines between 1920 to 2020.

These 'pad ads' have been hung both chronologically and in themes to represent how their designs have contributed to these harmful norms. Stigmas that negatively affect the wellbeing and sexual health of people who experience periods.

In both the exhibition and this catalogue, each individual 'pad ad' has been coded with a coloured dot to indicate which of these themes are evident in the art direction and copy writing.

They include:

- The misrepresentation of periods as a medical problem;
- Coding the menstrual taboo through the use of the colour blue, high fashion modeling, white clothes, the confinement of women to private domestic spaces, traditionally feminine roles/employment/sports and the oversexualisation of young women; and
- Modeling secretive behaviour between female friends, with males, between mother and daughters and through the design of packaging.

In order to get the response from consumers of these products, a survey was conducted. Ten of these 'pad ads' were shown in an online survey to gauge how much shame and secrecy they communicated.

Throughout the exhibition and catalogue you will see both quotes and data from the survey. What is positive to see is that the levels of shame and embarrassment are slowly improving. Maybe it's the inclusion of more women in creative roles in advertising agencies that have had this effect. Or maybe it's a greater awareness of empathy in the producers of the 'pad ads'.

Either way, 'Sanitary Secrets' encourages graphic designers, visual communicators and art directors to question and address harmful norms in their work. It also encourages the public to have a more positive attitude towards periods by questioning feelings of shame and secretive behaviours.



1. Left: 1938, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 14 No. 15, pp.21, The Bulletin Newspaper, Sydney.

# Five whole years of your life ...

Here's an astonishing fact...the days in an average woman's life when she needs sanitary protection, add up to five whole years or more!
That's a lot of days. Every woman ought to learn to make them easier, more comfortable days. So—if you are still buying the same brand of sanitary napkins you started buying years ago—here's news you ought to hear...
There's something better now! Modess—a napkin so much SOFIER and SAFER that it is bringing new comfort and peace of mind to women everywhere!

Cut a Modess pad in two and examine the filler. It's fluffy, soft as down—entirely different from the crepey, close-packed layers in other napkins. That's why Modess never chafes.

Now test the moisture-proof backing inside a Modess pad. Pour water on it—see that not a drop can "strike through!" No other napkin gives this special, CERTAIN-SAFE protection.

Yet for all its greater comfort and safety, Modess actually costs LESS—it is economcial.

A PRODUCT OF JOHNSON & JOHNSON

Ask for M SANITARY NAPKINS



Ask also for VEMO (Deodorant Powder)

A soothing, absorbed and mildly astringent powder for personal hygiene. Sprinkle freely on Sanitary Napkins.



1. Right: 1926, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol.1 No. 50, pp.27, *The Bulletin Newspaper*, Sydney.



2. Below: 1926, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 2 No. 43, pp.23, *The* Bulletin Newspaper, Sydney.





3. Below: 1926, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 2 No. 9, pp.58, *The* Bulletin Newspaper, Sydney.



4. Below: 1926, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 2 No. 50, pp.2, *The* Bulletin Newspaper, Sydney.







## Four Marvellous Features

Protection, Immaculacy, Deodorization, Ease of Disposal

KOTEX is made from super-absorbent Cellucotton, a wonderful surgical product which absorbs 16 times its own weight in moisture.

This absorbency insures protection always.

It prevents the anxiety which affects peace-of-mind and consequent poise. You can live your normal life undisturbed. This absorbency also permits the immaculacy, the exquisite personal daintiness which alone satisfies fastidious women. This wonderful new discovery—deodorization—completes perfection.

Last, yet the most important of all, is ease of disposal. You get rid of Kotex as easily as a sheet of tissue, the same way. This forever ends this constant source of embarrassment.

If unable to procure, a packet of Kotex will be mailed post free upon receipt of postal-note for 3/11. Address: Miss Lillian Cheek, Care of Walter Cathro Pty. Ltd., 50 York Street, Sydney.

5. Below: 1926, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 2 No. 51, pp.51, *The* Bulletin Newspaper, Sydney. 6. Below: 1928, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 4 No. 11, pp.35, The Bulletin Newspaper, Sydney. 7. Below: 1929, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 5 No.6, pp.35, *The* Bulletin Newspaper, Sydney. 8. Below: 1929, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 5 No. 14, pp.21, *The* Bulletin Newspaper, Sydney.











2. Below: 1930, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 68 No. 40, pp.17, The Bulletin Newspaper, Sydney.



3. Below: 1930, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 6 No. 32, pp.24, *The* Bulletin Newspaper, Sydney.



4. Below: 1932, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 8 No. 34, pp.30, *The* Bulletin Newspaper, Sydney.



5. Below: 1933, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 9 No. 22, pp.20, *The* Bulletin Newspaper, Sydney.











1. Right: 1939, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 15 No. 25, pp.65, The Bulletin Newspaper, Sydney.





6. Below: 1934, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 10 No.29, pp.57, The Bulletin Newspaper, Sydney.





7. Below: 1935, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 11 No. 30, pp.457, The Bulletin Newspaper, Sydney.



8. Below: 1936, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 12. No. 51, pp.51, The Bulletin Newspaper, Sydney.



9. Below: 1937, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 13 No. 42, pp.63, The Bulletin Newspaper, Sydney.





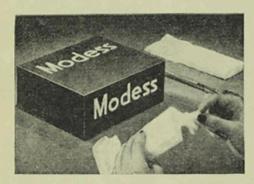




1. Below: 1940, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 16 No. 26, pp.30, *The Bulletin Newspaper,* Sydney.



Gr-r-! I was cross as a hear! Our indoor tennis tournament would come at the wrong time of the month! "You take my place," I told Nancy. "I'll be too chafed to jump around!" "Bosh!" laughed Nancy. "That's no excuse nowadays! Haven't you heard about Miracle Modess with 'Safety Zoning'?"

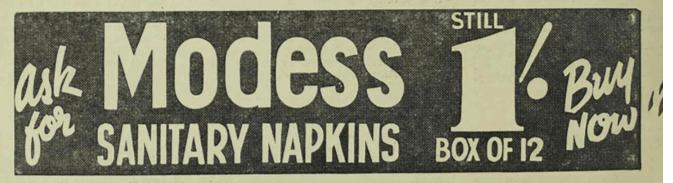


And back she came in a minute with a box of Modess. "Look—" Nancy said, cutting a pad. "Modess isn't a layer-type napkin. It has a wonderful filler of fluff. So airy-soft. Modess moulds to the body perfectly without bulk or bunching. And Modess stays softer because 'Safety Zoning' acts for your assurance and comfort, keeping comfortable longer than ever before!"

Try it now!....



Well, I whizzed through one match after another! As comfortable as you please—thanks to Modess! I felt perfectly safe, too, because every Modess pad has a moisture-resistant backing to guard against accidents. So you can see I'm really grateful for Miracle Modess! And lucky for me, it costs no more!













2. Above: 1942, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 18 No. 44, pp.22, *The* Bulletin Newspaper, Sydney.



3. Above: 1943, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 19 No. 12, pp.32, *The Bulletin Newspaper*, Sydney.



**4. Above**: 1944, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 20 No. 7, pp.32, *The Bulletin Newspaper*, Sydney.



5. Above: 1945, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 21 No. 6, pp.20, *The* Bulletin Newspaper, Sydney.



6. Below: 1946, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 22 No. 6, pp.15, *The* Bulletin Newspaper, Sydney.



7. Below: 1947, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 23 No. 11, pp.40, *The* Bulletin Newspaper, Sydney.



8. Below: 1949, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 25 No. 11, pp.29, *The Bulletin Newspaper*, Sydney.

















1. Above: 1951, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 27 No. 11, pp.25, *The Bulletin Newspaper*, Sydney.



2. Above: 1952, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 28 No. 12, pp.34, *The Bulletin Newspaper*, Sydney.



3. Above: 1953, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 29 No. 17, pp.25, *The Bulletin Newspaper*, Sydney.



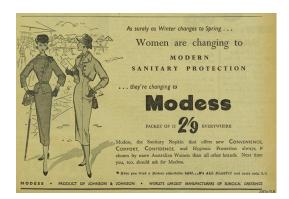
4. Above: 1955, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, February 9, pp. 46, Australia.



**5. Below**: 1954, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 30 No. 12, pp.25, *The Bulletin Newspaper*, Sydney.



6. Below: 1959, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, July 15, pp.6, Australia.

















7.Above: 1955, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, January 5, pp.4, Australia.



8. Above: 1957, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, October 30, pp.66, Australia.



9. Above: 1955, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, February 16, pp.51, Australia.



10. Above: 1957, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, September 4, pp.16, Australia.



11. Above: 1958, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, June 4, pp.72, Australia.



**12. Below**: 1955, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, January 12, pp.26, Australia.













1. Above: 1960, The Australian Women's Weekly, July 15, pp.26, Australia.



2. Above: 1954, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 30 No. 38, pp.23, The Bulletin Newspaper, Sydney.



3. Above: 1962, The Australian Women's Weekly, February 21, pp.41, Australia.



4. Above: 1964, The Australian Women's Weekly, May 13, pp.52, Australia.



5. Below: 1960, The Australian Women's Weekly, July 15, pp.26, Australia.



6. Below: 1965, The Australian Women's Weekly, June 13, pp.31, Australia.



7. Below: 1966, The Australian Women's Weekly, April 20, pp.89, Australia.



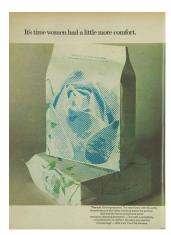
8. Below: 1967, The Australian Women's Weekly, September 11, pp.28, Australia.











9. Below: 1967, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, June 14, pp.50, Australia.











1. Above: 1970, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, August 19, pp.66, Australia.



2. Above: 1971, The Australian Women's Weekly, April 14, pp.42, Australia.



3. Above: 1973, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, October 10, pp.90, Australia.





**4. Below**: 1975, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, June 11, pp.90, Australia.



5. Below: 1976, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, March 3, pp.44, Australia.



6. Below: 1976, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, March 3, pp.44, Australia.



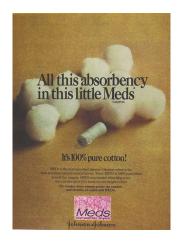
7. Below: 1978, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, March 29, pp.50, Australia.



















8. Above: 1972, The Australian Women's Weekly, July 12, pp.34, Australia.



9.Above: 1974, *The*Australian Women's Weekly,
September 18, pp.20,
Australia.



10. Above: 1974, *The 1*Australian Women's Weekly,
September 25, pp.32,
Australia.



11. Above: 1975, *The A Australian Women's Weekly*, January 11, pp.47,





12. Below: 1978, *The*Australian Women's Weekly,

November 15, pp.142,

Australia.



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13. Below: 1978, *The*Australian Women's Weekly,

November 15, pp.148-49,

Australia.



14. Below: 11978, *The*Australian Women's Weekly,
November 29, pp.18,
Australia.





















1.Above: 1980, The Australian Women's Weekly, January 2, pp.33, Australia.



2. Above: 1980, Dolly, May, pp.69, Australia.



3. Above: 1954, The Australian Woman's Mirror, Vol. 30 No. 38, pp.23, The Bulletin Newspaper, Sydney.



4. Above: 1980, The Australian Women's Weekly, August 27, pp.39, Australia.



5.Above: 1982, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, April 14, pp.50, Australia.







7. Below: 1983, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, May, pp.280-81, Australia.



8. Below: 1983, The Australian Women's Weekly, May, pp.299, Australia.



9. Below: 1986, The Australian Women's Weekly, March, pp.66-67, Australia.



10. Below: 1986, The Australian Women's Weekly, March, pp.114, Australia.























11. Above: 1982, The Australian Women's Weekly, April 14, pp.50, Australia.



12. Above: 1983, The Australian Women's Weekly, May, pp.84-85, Australia.



13. Above: 1983, The Australian Women's Weekly, May, pp.90, Australia.



14. Above: 1983, The Australian Women's Weekly, May, pp.151, Australia.



**15. Above**: 1983, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, May, pp.258, Australia.



16. Below: 1986, The Australian Women's Weekly, March, pp.155, Australia.



17. Below: 1986, The Australian Women's Weekly, March, pp.297, Australia.



**18. Below**: 1987, *Dolly,* May, pp.31, Australia.



**19. Below**: 1987, *Dolly*, May, pp.142-43, Australia.

















1.Above: 1992, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, April, pp.172-73, Australia.



2. Above: 1992, *The*Australian Women's
Weekly, April, pp.177,
Australia.



3. Above: 1994, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, October, pp.154-55, Australia.



4. Below: 1994, The Australian Women's Weekly, March, pp.112, Australia.



5. Below: 1994, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, October, pp.32-33, Australia.



6. Below: 1994, The Australian Women's Weekly, October, pp.157, Australia.



7. Below: 1987, Dolly, March, pp.7, Australia.



8. Below: 1987, Dolly, March, pp.98, Australia.













1. Right: 2001, *Dolly,* August, pp.124, Australia.











9. Above: 2004, Dolly, March, pp.108, Australia.



10. Above: 2004, Dolly, March, pp.148, Australia. 12. Above: 2005, Dolly, March, pp.138, Australia.



13. Above: 2009, Dolly, March, pp.130, Australia.











1. Above: 2010, Dolly, November, pp.59, Australia.

2.Above: 2018, Frankie, July 1, pp.81, Australia.

3. Above: 2018, *The*Australian Women's Weekly,
May 1, pp.147, Australia.

4. Below: 2019, Girlfriend, January 1, pp.42, Australia. 5. Below: 2020, Girlfriend, March 1, pp.80, Australia.



6. Below: 2020, Frankie, September 1, pp.61, Australia.







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